

Issues in U.S./NIS Non-proliferation Cooperation
Senator Pete V. Domenici

Conference

*Assessing U.S. Dismantlement and Non-proliferation Assistance Programs in
the Newly Independent States*

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Thank you for the invitation to join you in assessing U.S. dismantlement and non-proliferation programs. I want to congratulate the faculty and staff here at the Monterey Institute for your critical contributions – both in evaluating proliferation threats and in analyzing existing policies.

U.S. non-proliferation policies, especially those involving bilateral cooperation with the former Soviet Union, make essential contributions to global stability and security. Your conference should provide important insights on these programs.

At its peak, the Soviet nuclear stockpile probably comprised over 60,000 weapons. Their nuclear weapons complex possessed extensive production and research facilities, tons of plutonium and highly enriched uranium, and thousands of nuclear scientists and engineers.

With the end of the Cold War, perhaps the greatest global security challenge became containment and management of proliferation threats, many of which were in danger of being fueled with former Soviet capabilities. Eight years after the end of the Cold War, this remains a serious threat.

Obviously, the future of all non-proliferation programs will be heavily impacted by the decisions of voters here and in Russia in the coming year. I have no crystal ball, but I remain optimistic. I believe both countries desire further strategic reductions and both need cooperation to achieve non-proliferation goals. I think each recognizes the urgent need to be engaged -- to address remaining problems in the states of the former Soviet Union and emerging global proliferation threats.

Your Conference has already discussed many of the dismantlement and non-proliferation programs in the Newly Independent States – from missile dismantlement to chemical and biological weapons elimination to preventing transfer of technical knowledge on weapons of mass destruction. There is no shortage of programs, each with a credible mission statement. They involve many agencies and draw funding from several appropriations bills.

However, all our programs suffer from very limited coordination. Several programs share similar goals. In some cases, one program has solved a complex problem, like Russian tax issues, while other programs are flailing away at solutions. With all this uncoordinated activity, it should be no surprise that our non-proliferation programs resemble a patchwork quilt done by diverse artists who pride themselves on individuality.

The net effect of our non-proliferation programs is far less than it could be. These programs are begging for coherent oversight and inter-agency cooperation. To address this need, which is far from new, the 1996 Nunn-Lugar-Domenici legislation called for appointment of a high-level non-proliferation czar. Unfortunately, however, the Administration has refused to act.

It is abundantly obvious that creating coherent non-proliferation policies, whether global or specific to the Newly Independent States, requires coordination across agencies and an ability to allocate funding commensurate with objectives. Recently, the Deutch Commission again highlighted the need for this coordinator.

Without such coordination, inter-agency turf fights remain unresolved, potential synergies aren't exploited, and redundancy and inefficiency are present. I hope that examples of these problems have been discussed here.

As these cooperative non-proliferation programs have been developed, the U.S. Congress has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to fund well conceived programs. Such programs must offer concrete, verifiable, quantitative results that positively impact U.S. interests.

On the other hand, programs that can not demonstrate measurable results in our interest receive minimal interest and funding. In a few minutes, I'll discuss an example of this latter category of program by discussing some of my concerns with our initiatives in the Russian nuclear cities.

The Cooperative Threat Reduction program is a good example of the first category, where concrete results are well documented. At any time, that program can list the number of launch vehicles that have been dismantled or the number of nuclear submarines that have been destroyed. The Highly Enriched Uranium program can catalog the amount of material converted from weapons use. The new plutonium disposition program must similarly define its contributions. These kinds of initiatives receive strong support from Congress.

As just one example, Congress appropriated \$525 Million last year to achieve two specific non-proliferation goals:

- < to maintain momentum in conversion of Russian highly enriched uranium, and
- < to offer an incentive for conclusion of a bilateral agreement on plutonium disposition.

Let me return to issues associated with the Russian nuclear weapons complex in light of these observations on program funding criteria. Some of the current programs focused on that complex have well quantified goals that lead to strong support, some programs don't.

The weapons complex contains three main capabilities: weapons production capacity, materials for those weapons, and people. Each area presents a potential proliferation threat. These threats must be viewed in the context of the prevailing conditions in Russia. Their economic situation is especially relevant in any U.S. efforts to address the human dimension of non-proliferation issues.

Despite the fact that START I and II do not explicitly limit warhead numbers, both countries have been reducing their stockpiles. And it is my strong hope that future arms control agreements will continue toward reduced stockpiles of all weapons in both nations.

But as warhead dismantlement progresses, some proliferation concerns actually increase. Certainly the threat of mutual destruction decreases with dismantlement, so we want to encourage it to proceed. But dismantlement increases stocks of surplus weapons materials, which could be vulnerable to proliferation.

Furthermore, the fragile economic situation in Russia has led to significant degradation in the economic well-being of scientists and engineers in the nuclear cities. This contributes to proliferation concerns if there is any possibility that these experts may be enticed to relocate to other places.

Our current programs are doing a reasonably good job with the materials, but less so with the people. The Materials Protection, Control and Accounting, or MPC&A, programs are generally viewed as increasing the security of Russian materials; this program is a good example of a successful program. The HEU and plutonium disposition programs are also viewed positively.

MPC&A hasn't been perfect, because it too suffers from some elements of the issues with the human and economic dimensions. The program's modern equipment wasn't fully prepared to compensate for unpaid guards at the facilities, electricity outages resulting from unpaid utility bills, or lack of a culture to even use the equipment.

The largest concern with people involves "brain drain" issues, wherein scientists and engineers with critical knowledge might sell their knowledge. There are several programs, like the Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention, the Civilian Research and Development Foundation, and the International Science and Technology Center that impact these issues. These programs can point to some real successes; IPP has 19 technologies in or near commercialization.

Nevertheless, these programs would benefit from additional coordination. I plan to work with Senator Lugar and other interested Senators to ensure this improved coordination.

Brain drain issues are most acute in the nuclear cities. Weapons scientists - once the pampered and prestigious elite of a superpower - now face daily economic hardship. Despite our best intentions, however, the U.S. program focused in these cities, the Nuclear Cities Initiative, have barely begun to scratch the surface in dealing with this threat.

The U.S. has significantly reduced the size of our nuclear weapons complex. These reductions were accomplished openly, and are transparent to Russia. Russia, in contrast, has barely started to downsize its complex.

Our primary objective should be to encourage reductions in the size of

Russia's nuclear weapons complex, including facilities, materials, and technical expertise. Without such reductions, the large Russian production capacity will preclude reductions in numbers of weapons to low levels, simply because Russia could rapidly rebuild them.

But at the same time, it is also in the U.S. interests to ensure that adequate stability and technical competence remain in Russia's nuclear weapons complex to maintain safe and secure management of their nuclear arsenal at a level ideally set through bilateral, and future multilateral, agreements.

Certainly the Russians will be reluctant to share everything about their nuclear complex with us. But we don't even have enough information on the expertise within these cities to evaluate any strategy that Russia might propose for downsizing. And unless we can evaluate a Russian strategy for its impact on U.S. interests, we shouldn't invest large resources in helping them accomplish their downsizing.

Just as examples, which facilities and how many scientists are required for a safe, secure Russian nuclear deterrent? Or, what expertise do they possess and what activities could they be involved in of mutual benefit to both the U.S. and Russia? Each step should proceed within an agreed plan that details the ultimate size and shape of the nuclear complex.

Ideally, we should work with Russia to define the necessary core components of their future weapons complex. Together, we should look for opportunities to assist in commercial opportunities for the nuclear cities, because some of their scientists have capabilities that could be channeled into commercial activities. However, that can't be the only element in an effective approach, and right now it is the main part of our strategy.

For example, it may be appropriate to consider contracting with some of the Russian nuclear workers for research in areas of specific interest to us, like non-proliferation efforts or improved environmental clean-up approaches. It might even be appropriate to provide some incentives for early retirement to some of their more senior nuclear experts. But, no matter what new approaches are used, it must be clear from the outset what benefits should be anticipated for both nations.

In conclusion, let me again note that non-proliferation programs with measurable results that clearly impact U.S. security have and will continue to

receive funding. If there's doubt regarding efficient use of U.S. funds, inadequate accountability, or confusion about the mission, program direction, or turf, Congress has and will act accordingly.